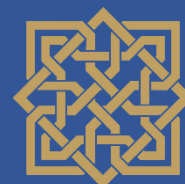


According to the Syllabus of:



**CAMBRIDGE**  
International Examinations



# A Level Islamic Studies (9488)

## PAPER 3

### Section B

#### Islamic world heritage

Literature and  
philosophy



**Jawaid Aurangzaib**

**Izhar Publication**



# Paper 3

# Heritage of Islam

## Section **B**

### Islamic world heritage

### 3. 3 Literature and philosophy

*By: Jawaid Aurangzaib*







(a) Examine the philosophical approach (*falsafah*) to Islam. [10]

(b) 'Only revelations should be used to learn about Islamic beliefs.' Evaluate this statement. [15]

[Total: 25]<sup>1</sup>

(a) The philosophical approach (*falsafah*) to Islam. [10]

**AO1 – Knowledge and understanding**

Mark according to the AO1 – 10 mark levels of response marking grid for knowledge and understanding.

Answers may include some of the following ideas, but all valid material must be credited.

- Islamic philosophy was a scholarly debate about the creation. It used reasoning and discussion as a source of authority to derive understanding.
- Islamic philosophy followed the sorts of discussions held by ancient Greek philosophers, which predated the revelation of the Qur'an. It was not necessarily about religion itself but could be about the creation.
- The early Kalam movement and the rationalists known as the Mu'tazilah were followed by the falsafah movement encouraged by Caliph Al-Mamun, from the ninth century onwards. Scholars such as Ibn Sina and Averroes wrote on philosophy. Ancient Greek works from Aristotle were translated, preserved and passed on to Western Europe where they had been lost.
- Many traditional Muslims frowned upon philosophy and Al-Ghazali, the Sunni Muslim scholar, first discussed it but then, after a personal crisis of faith, said that it was unnecessary.
- His Incoherence of the Philosophers was extremely influential in turning medieval Muslim thought away from Aristotelianism, philosophical speculation and theological debate. It marked the ascendancy of the Asharite school within Islamic philosophy and theological discourse.
- Muslim philosophers tended to limit their use of reasoning and did not consider reasoning where it might contradict revealed truths from the Qur'an and Sunnah. As such Islamic philosophy has been described in various ways more limited than its western equivalent.
- Credit answers which examine a work of philosophy from a Muslim writer in some depth, or reference to a range of different works and the overall point behind them.
- Answers could point out the significance of this question in whether Muslims were open to external influences and rational debate, which helped to progress the Muslim world for a time, and the struggle against more conservative forces which were said by some to restrict and deter philosophical learning.

<sup>1</sup> Specimen 2021

[illegible]

[illegible]





**(b) ‘Only revelations should be used to learn about Islamic beliefs.’ Evaluation of the statement. [15]**

**AO2 – Analysis and evaluation**

Mark according to the AO2 –15 mark levels of response marking grid for analysis and evaluation. Answers may refer to any Islamic religious theory or teaching. Students may propose, analyse and evaluate some of the following arguments. All relevant arguments must be credited.

- The Qur’an was revealed directly from God as the last and final message relevant for all time and to be kept unchanged.
- Therefore, it could be argued that only revelations in the Qur’an should be used to derive Islamic beliefs.
- However, Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said in his final sermon that he left behind both the Qur’an and his example.
- Many actions in Islam and the explanations of many beliefs only make sense by understanding the context of the life of Muhammad (pbuh) which helps Muslims understand the details of their beliefs.
- However, the Qur’an has been referred to as an eternal message which can also be observed in the natural laws of the created world. Some scholars say that whatever is in nature, which has been made by God, must agree with the book which God also made. It follows that observation of nature could also be a valid source of authority to derive beliefs.
- Ibn Tufayl wrote the story Hayy ibn Yaqzan about a boy who was marooned alone on a desert island yet worked out belief in a single creator God by observing the natural world. He did so without the corruption of civilisation and organized religion. This example could be used to show that observation should be used.
- Some Muslims believe that harmony should be sought between what is natural and what is in the Qur’an. People can sometimes misinterpret ancient scripture, so there should be a common-sense check to see if teachings work in Muslim lives.
- Answers could focus on the word ‘only’ and discuss different interpretations. It might be that in some circumstances other sources of authority are used, including those from traditional shariah where Qur’anic injunctions are absent. But in other circumstances they are not, as there can be no contradictions between the Qur’an and nature.

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(a) Explain how Islamic philosophers used reasoning in their writings. [10]

(b) 'Islamic philosophy has little in common with ancient Greek philosophy.' Evaluate this statement. [15]

[Total: 25]<sup>2</sup>

**(a) Islamic philosophers' use reasoning in their writings.**

Mark according to the AO1 – 10-mark levels of response marking grid for knowledge and understanding.

Answers may include some of the following ideas, but all valid material must be credited.

- Muslims may refer to Qur'anic knowledge as the revelation and to signs to be found in the natural world. These can be used by philosophers with reasoning to work out knowledge.
- The Qur'an 41:53 states: 'Soon will We show them our Signs in the (furthest) regions (of the earth), and in their own souls, until it becomes manifest to them that this is the Truth. Is it not enough that thy Lord doth witness all things?'
- In the first few centuries of Islam, some theologians engaged in kalam, deriving theological knowledge through reasoning. Then, a philosophical movement, known as falsafah, arose during the time of the 'Abbasids. Some Islamic philosophers made observations and speculated on meaning. Others argued that this is incoherent or even heretical, if knowledge derived from revelation was questioned or contradicted.
- The Qur'an suggests that God made the universe in stages or days, and was therefore the essential first cause, eternal and therefore separate from the creation. Some Muslim writers found evidence in the creation such as a freshness or newness, to suggest that it was created in time.
- Candidates might refer to scholars, such as an example from one or more of the following:  
**Al-Biruni** worked out through careful observation that the planets were moving in a sphere like pattern. He also concluded that the earth was round. By calculating how far he could see to the horizon from the top of a hill, al-Biruni worked out the radius of the earth.
- He further went on to write a guide to religions and took a primarily observational, rather than judgemental approach.  
**Avicenna (Ibn Sina)** argued that the unity in the universe suggested the thing that existed was God. God was the 'necessary existent', the thing that had to be there. One cause led to the next.  
**Al-Ghazali** was a philosopher who used reasoning very much from a mainstream Islamic standpoint. He criticised using reasoning where it led to confusion and saw devotional practices as the way forward.  
**Spanish Sufi master Ibn Arabi** said that the universe was a reflection of the qualities of God. He deduced that as God is eternal, then his reflection, the creation, is not in the same dimension as time. He observed patterns in the universe, calculated its movement, and suggested it may go through cycles of birth, death and rebirth, a continuous creation.  
The novel, **Hayy Ibn Yaqzan**, written by Spanish Muslim Ibn Tufayl, fictionalises the account of a boy marooned on a desert island alone, who grows up to logically deduce, from the evidence in nature around him, various beliefs including the creation of the universe from a single being.
- Some Muslims, such as al-Jahiz and later Ibn Khaldun, even concluded from their observations that plants and animals may have evolved in some ways.
- It could be argued that Islamic observers did little to add to ancient Greek ideas, and their thoughts were limited by arguments with those who condemned speculation as un-Islamic. This mean that observations developed little into theory.

<sup>2</sup> October/November 2021



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This image shows a full page of white paper with horizontal dotted lines, typical of primary school writing paper. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

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**(b) 'Islamic philosophy has little in common with ancient Greek philosophy.' Evaluate this statement. Evaluation of the statement. [15]**

Mark according to the AO2 – 15-mark levels of response marking grid for analysis and evaluation. Answers may refer to any religious theory or teaching. Students may propose, analyse and evaluate some of the following arguments. All relevant arguments must be credited.

**Definitions**

- Definitions of philosophy might be made, and the different periods to be compared outlined.
- Candidates might focus on one or more writings they have studied and trace the influence of ancient Greek ideas through those works, making comparisons with Islamic ideas.

**Agree**

- Whilst Aristotle was influential, Avicenna (Ibn Sina) developed his own approach which became more influential in the Islamic world. He used reason and proof, as did the ancient Greeks, but applied this within the bounds of traditional Islamic belief, to be consistent with the belief in a single, all-powerful, creator God.
- Ibn al-Haytham found imitation (*taqlid*) limiting and thought that it should be restricted to the Prophetic traditions.
- Many other Muslims rejected Greek philosophy precisely because it went further than imitation of the Prophetic traditions. Al-Ghazali and rise of the Ash'ari school in the 12th century increased criticisms and denunciations of Greek philosophy and use of logic.

**Disagree**

- The use of logic by ancient Greeks was followed to some extent by Muslims who, in the early 'Abbasid period, developed analogy (*qiyas*) and individual interpretation (*ijtihad*). The Mu'tazilah were influenced by Aristotle, an ancient Greek philosopher, and went further by developing rationalism in justifying their doctrines.
- At this time the translation movement was promoted by 'Abbasid Caliph al-Ma'mun and others and ancient Greek philosophy was looked on favourably by some in ruling circles. Therefore, some common ideas developed.
- Islamic philosophy (*falsafah*) developed with writers such as al-Kindi and al-Farabi keen to borrow ideas from the ancient Greeks. They saw no conflict with pre-Islamic philosophical traditions.
- Ibn al-Haytham was influenced particularly by ancient Greek Ptolemy and used maths and science to demonstrate his points.

**Conclusions**

- An overview or judgement might distinguish between different periods in the development and decline of Islamic philosophy and the extent to which it had aspects in common with the ancient Greeks at those times, before coming to an overall conclusion.









(a) Explain how one significant writing, that you have studied, could express Islamic beliefs.

[10]

(b) Discuss the different ways in which Muslims might explain their main beliefs to others (da'wah).

[15]

[Total: 25]<sup>3</sup>

**(a) Express Islamic beliefs in significant writings. [10]**

Mark according to the AO1 – 10-mark levels of response marking grid for knowledge and understanding.

**AO1 – Knowledge and understanding**

Mark according to the AO1 – 10 mark levels of response marking grid for knowledge and understanding.

Answers may include some of the following ideas, but all valid material must be credited.

The works listed for study in the syllabus are:

- - Ibn Tufayl's work Hayy ibn Yaqzan
- - Al-Ghazali's Incoherence of the Philosophers
- - Ibn Khaldun's work on social science, The Muqaddimah
- - The mystical poetry of Rabi'a al-'Adawiyya
- - Al-Biruni's work on comparative religion, History of Religions
- - a published work chosen by the candidate
- How to express Islam depends on the style and focus of the work the candidate has chosen. For example, in **Hayy ibn Yaqzan**, Islamic beliefs are expressed by logical deduction. Belief in a single creator God by the boy Hayy, marooned on a desert island, is found by his observations of the world around him. This helps to communicate to others Islamic beliefs derived through rationalism, in the form of an attractive and engaging story.
- Al-Ghazali wrote from the standpoint of a traditional Sunni theologian. His works set out Islamic beliefs clearly, which could be used logically to teach others. Sunni Muslims might find these particularly familiar. Al-Ghazali also touches on some aspects of Sufism, which he explains through traditional theology.
- The mystical poetry of Rabi'a al-'Adawiyya might help to express Islamic beliefs to someone inspired by mysticism or
- Sufism. In her poetry, metaphors are used rather than direct explanations. She expresses the belief in God and submission to the will of God in the form of leaving behind attachment to this world and becoming full of love for a lover.
- Al-Biruni's work on comparative religion, History of Religions, takes an objective view of other religions, and is good for making comparisons and so explaining Islamic beliefs in comparison to other faiths.
- Ibn Khaldun's work could be used to explain Islamic beliefs from the point of view of social science. He writes about the five categories of action which help to explain why God's revelations demand human actions.

Good answers might include brief, relevant quotes and explanations from the key word chosen. Better responses will focus their answers on the style of the particular work chosen and how this might appeal to the reader in different ways, thereby communicating the concepts within them

<sup>3</sup> May/June 2022

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**(b) Different ways in which Muslims might explain their main beliefs to others (da'wah). [15]**

Mark according to the AO2 – 15-mark levels of response marking grid for analysis and evaluation. Answers may refer to any religious theory or teaching. Students may propose, analyse and evaluate some of the following arguments. All relevant arguments must be credited.

- Explanation of beliefs (*da'wah*) can mean preaching, talks or setting good examples. This can be in various contexts, to non-Muslims in mixed societies, or to Muslims who need encouragement to the straight path. The purpose can be for conversion or to encourage stricter adherence to Islamic practices by Muslims, or general explanations of Islam.
- Preaching is perhaps the most commonly known form of *da'wah*, following the Prophet's example and continuing throughout Islamic history. Islamic beliefs can be explained publicly through street preaching to everyone, and Muslims can preach in mosques to other Muslims so that they can learn more about their faith.
- Providing charity enables Muslims to show compassion, leading to opportunities for *da'wah*. Working alongside others on charitable campaigns raises awareness and knowledge of Islam through social action.
- Making translations and commentaries of the Qur'an and Hadith can help to spread them to more countries and for those countries to understand their teachings better. These translations can be published or provided online on the internet. Articles in magazines similarly can spread the word and enable misunderstandings to be clarified.
- Social media is an up and coming means of *da'wah*, by which Muslims can make contact with others and spread the word through forums. They might also join online advice sites where scholars can spread teachings and issue guidance in response to questions asked about modern-day ethical issues, not always laid out in the Qur'an.
- Immediately correcting a wrongdoing can be seen as a form of *da'wah*, as it corrects and helps others follow the straight path. This could be an error made during prayer or recitation or a general moral error. Many see immediate correction as a way of saving a person from making a mistake and a duty for Muslims to intervene.
- Special events such as *Iftar* meals, Eid festivities and opportunities to join Muslims for food and socializing provide a more casual setting for conversations about Islam to take place, and misconceptions talked through. Some people might prefer more relaxed settings like this than more formal events.
- Sufi spiritual gatherings can draw people into thinking about the spiritual side of Islam and thereby help them to experience love for the faith and follow their interest by seeking out *da'wah*.
- Evaluations could consider which methods are more useful and effective in modern contexts, bearing in mind the different situations Muslims face, and the ways which are more effective for communication and persuasion. Candidates might consider a context known to them to make a personal conclusion.









**(a) Describe how Islamic beliefs and values are expressed in one significant writing. [10]**

**(b) Evaluate how one significant work written by a Muslim might help others to understand more about Islamic beliefs. [15]**

**[Total: 25] <sup>4</sup>**

**(a) Islamic beliefs and values are expressed in one significant writing. [10]**

Mark according to the AO1 – 10-mark levels of response marking grid for knowledge and understanding.

Answers may include some of the following ideas, but all valid material must be credited.

- The works listed for study in the syllabus are: – Ibn Tufayl's work Hayy ibn Yaqzan
- – Al-Ghazali's Incoherence of the Philosophers
- – Ibn Khaldun's work on social science, The Muqaddimah
- – the mystical poetry of Rabi'a al-'Adawiyya
- – Al-Biruni's work on comparative religion, History of Religions
- – a published work chosen by the candidate
- Islamic beliefs and values might be focused by the candidate on particular areas according to the focus of the work they have chosen. For example, in Hayy ibn Yaqzan, the logical deduction of belief in a single creator God by the boy Hayy, marooned on a desert island, from his observations of the world around him. This is an example of belief derived through rationalism.
- Al-Ghazali makes the point that rationalism has flaws and incoherence and to him, acceptance of revealed belief and mystical, inner experience from Sufi practices are the best way to find Islamic beliefs and values.
- Al-Biruni's work on comparative religion takes an objective, neutral stance towards the Indian religions Biruni observed on his travels. This contrasts with the faith-based, devotional bias of most writers at the time. Al-Biruni's work is therefore referred to as the first study of comparative religion in the modern sense.
- Ibn Khaldun's work refers to history and social science and he makes the point that objective truth is important in study. He wrote about hadith, dream interpretation and fiqh, particularly the five categories of action as the basis for the beliefs and values of Islamic society.

Good answers might include brief, relevant quotes and explanations from the key word chosen. Better responses will draw out the particular approach to beliefs and values made by the writer and give a clear and full explanation of this in their account.

<sup>4</sup> October/November 2022

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**(b) Evaluation: How one significant work written by a Muslim might help others to understand more about Islamic beliefs? [15]**

Mark according to the AO2 –15-mark levels of response marking grid for analysis and evaluation. Answers may refer to any religious theory or teaching. Students may propose, analyse and evaluate some of the following arguments. All relevant arguments must be credited.

**Definitions**

- The work should be chosen from the list given in part (a). A definition of the Islamic beliefs covered by the work might be included in an introduction, or a very brief outline of the work itself.

**Understanding of Islamic beliefs**

- It might be argued that since Islamic beliefs are common to all Muslims, the expression of them is similar. The belief in one, unseen God is expressed by referring to God's power in the creation of the natural world, and as logically the first cause behind the universe. God creates beauty as signs to support people's belief in God. These aspects can be found in most of the works given.
- The unseen nature of God is also important because the works are ways of expressing and explaining God. The God of Islam cannot be drawn or visually represented. All of these works use words to portray the unseen. The description of characteristics, such as the merciful or other 99 names of God, through God's characteristics, are common, albeit through different words chosen.
- Ibn Tufayl's work Hayy ibn Yaqzan expresses God through rational language. Al-Ghazali's Incoherence of the Philosophers criticises this and puts emphasis on mystical experience and acceptance of revelation.
- The poetry of Rabi'a al-'Adawiyya also takes a mystical approach. These different ways of approaching religious understanding – rational and mystical – represent different traditions of how Muslims might understand God and could be elaborated on in more detail according to the works chosen by the candidate.
- Ibn Khaldun's work on social science, The Muqaddimah and Al-Biruni's work on comparative religion, History of Religions represent objective works of enquiry, similar to a modern academic approach and in contrast to a faith-based writing. This way of expressing observed beliefs might be contrasted with the above.

**Conclusions**

A personal conclusion drawing together the ways in which the work might help someone else, be they Muslim or non-Muslim, understand Islamic beliefs, could be made at the end.









**(a) Explain the main features of Islamic philosophy (*falsafah*). [10]**

**(b) Compare Islamic philosophy (*falsafah*) with the philosophy of the Greeks. [15]**

**[Total: 25] <sup>5</sup>**

**(a) Main features of Islamic philosophy (*falsafah*). [10]**

Mark according to the AO1 – 10-mark levels of response marking grid for

AO1 – Knowledge and understanding

Mark according to the AO1 – 10-mark levels of response marking grid for knowledge and understanding.

Answers may include some of the following ideas, but all valid material must be credited.

- Islamic philosophy (*falsafah*) used reasoning and logic to address key questions, such as the origins of the universe, what causes events to happen, definitions of truth, how to use logic, make an argument and so on.
- The Islamic philosophy movement grew out of the translation movement in Baghdad under the 'Abbasids. Many Islamic philosophers commented on ancient Greek philosophers, especially Aristotle, and based their ideas on his work.
- Islamic philosophers agreed with theologians about the main beliefs of Islam, such as the oneness of God. A key feature of the philosophers was that they derived such beliefs through observation and logical deduction, independently of revealed text.
- Islamic philosophers attempted to explain questions about the origin of the universe in rational ways, by referring to the need for a first cause, and by references in the Qur'an referring to movement of the spheres which logically require a first cause. However, not all saw it like that, and some thought the universe was eternal.
- Islamic philosophers distinguished between a person's body and soul and argued that the soul was separated at death and resurrected in the afterlife, whereas theologians argued for the bodily resurrection. Further questions about essence and existence were discussed in relation to any person or objects qualities.
- Science was another focus of the Islamic philosophers. Their emphasis on observation of signs and logical deduction from them promoted scientific method, particularly through the work of Ibn al-Haytham.
- 'Islamic' philosophy in some ways was about questions of truth and logic and not necessarily 'Islamic' – some other religions were also part of the movement under the 'Abbasids. In other ways it was 'Islamic' in that it was bound by what was deemed acceptable under the definitions made by Islamic theologians at the time, based on their interpretations of the Qur'an and Sunnah.

<sup>5</sup> May/June 2023

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### Comparison Islamic philosophy (*falsafah*) with the philosophy of the Greeks. [15]

Mark according to the AO2 – 15-mark levels of response marking grid for analysis and evaluation. Answers may refer to any religious theory or teaching. Students may propose, analyse and evaluate some of the following arguments. All relevant arguments must be credited.

#### AO2 – Analysis and evaluation

Mark according to the AO2 – 15-mark levels of response marking grid for analysis and evaluation. Answers may refer to any Islamic religious theory or teaching. Students may propose, analyse and evaluate some of the following arguments.

All relevant arguments must be credited.

#### Definitions

- Ancient Greek philosophy was defined by writers such as Plato and Aristotle. Islamic philosophy was defined by writers such as al-Farabi, Ibn Sina and Ibn Rushd.

#### Similarities

- Islamic and Greek philosophers used reasoned argument and logic to make their case, especially drawing on the tradition of using evidence drawn from Aristotle. Some, such as Muslim philosopher Ibn Sina used it in varying ways, but the tradition of putting a case was common to both.
- Islamic and Greek philosophers were both very much influenced by Aristotle and his ideas about causation, essence and existence, particularly as applied to the origins of things.
- Both Islamic and Greek philosophers were multi-disciplinary and addressed wider fields of study ranging from science to questions of philosophy; use of language and hypothesis to test an argument; and addressed many of the same questions in similar ways.

#### Differences

- Islamic philosophy was bound by the belief in the oneness of God, and other beliefs as defined by theologians.
- Despite some philosophers using their own reasoning, most justified their logic with reference to the Qur'an.
- Most Islamic philosophers, though not all, disagreed with Greek ideas about the eternity of the universe, because they argued there must have been a first cause, God, who was outside of time. If God was not outside and above the universe, then that would limit God, an idea which was unacceptable to Islamic theologians.
- Greek philosophy was part of mainstream thought for society as a whole, whereas many Muslim philosophers concluded that the philosopher was the exception who might need to develop thought as a recluse whereas most people in society should follow religious laws as philosophy was beyond them.

#### Conclusions

Conclusions might sum up the most important differences and make an evaluation about how far they were similar and how far different. A note about the significance of this might be mentioned.









(a) Explain how Muslims may find meaning in signs in the natural world. [10]

(b) 'It is easier to learn from signs in the natural world than from revelations.' To what extent is this true for Muslims? [15]

[Total: 25] <sup>6</sup>

**(a) How Muslims may find meaning in signs in the natural world. [10]**

Mark according to the AO1 – 10-mark levels of response marking grid for knowledge and understanding.

Answers may include some of the following ideas, but all valid material must be credited.

- Muslims link everything in everyday life to part of God's predestined plan, so they see signs in everything. For example, Muslims say thanks to God, alhamdulillah, for food, and after any good news, because it is seen as a good sign that God has given them something for their life. The same is true if they see a beautiful scene in nature: subhanallah for what God has given.
- Muslims might see the beauty of the natural world as inspiration for their faith. Signs might make a Muslim thankful for the food and fruits which God has given them and see their provision as a sign of what God has given.
- The Qur'an encourages Muslims to look at signs in the natural world and think about them, because they have been sent by God to help Muslims strengthen their beliefs. For example:
- He doth regulate all affairs, explaining the signs in detail, that ye may believe with certainty in the meeting with your Lord. Qur'an 13:2, and Behold! in these things there are signs for people who believe. Qur'an 6:99
- In Qur'an 41:53 it refers to signs in the universe and people's own bodies.
- Muslims might read about the teachings of the philosophers who observed the natural world and its signs, and derived meaning from them, using reasoning.
- For example, Ibn Tufayl wrote about deriving belief using signs from the natural world.
- Muslim philosopher Ibn Sina wrote on the importance of reasoning.
- Muslims are expected to be guardians/viceregents of the world which God has created, so they might interpret environmental problems as signs that humanity has neglected this duty. Such signs might be interpreted as a warning to change polluting ways and take action to preserve the environment.

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<sup>6</sup> OCT/NOV 2023







**(b) 'It is easier to learn from signs in the natural world than from revelations.' To what extent is this true for Muslims? [15]**

Mark according to the AO2 – 15-mark levels of response marking grid for analysis and evaluation. Answers may refer to any religious theory or teaching. Students may propose, analyse and evaluate some of the following arguments. All relevant arguments must be credited.

**Definitions**

- Signs in the natural world might include the beauty of nature; natural events such as earthquakes and weather storms; eclipses of the moon or sun; and the results of things humans do as manifested in the environment around them.

**Agree**

- Revelations may refer specifically to the Qur'an, which contains some verses which are clear and some which may appear less clear (according to the Qur'an itself, Qur'an 3.7).
- Experience of the natural world is something all Muslims can do themselves; it is clear and all around. Muslims can see with their own eyes the natural environment and how it is sometimes damaged by human exploitation, and hear of pressing environmental campaigns, which to Muslims are important to preserve God's created world.
- Muslim philosophers such as Ibn Tufayl wrote in his novel Hayy ibn Yaqzan about how the boy Hayy worked out signs from the natural world and derived beliefs from them. He did this without the distractions of corruption from society. This suggests that following signs can be clear.

**Disagree**

- The revelation of the Qur'an explains to Muslims the key teachings of their faith, especially the beliefs in the oneness of God, the belief in prophethood and in life after death. These beliefs require definition and elaboration, which means it is better to use the details given in the Qur'an than other sources.
- Revelation, particularly the Qur'an, is the first source of Islamic law (shariah) because it is the word of God for Muslims. If it is the first source of Islamic law, then it should also be used as the first source for Muslim individuals for their personal guidance.
- There is a danger that if Muslims follow signs alone, they might come to interpretations which are not accepted by mainstream scholars. Therefore, revelations should always be used for guidance, and revelations should set the context in which Muslims look at the natural world for signs.

**Conclusions**

Conclusions will come to a judgement about which way is easiest and for what reasons. The significance of this might be mentioned in the life and practice of Muslims.









(a) Explain Islamic philosophers' use of reasoning about creation. [10]

(b) Discuss links between reasoning about creation and Muslims' care for the environment. [15]

[Total: 25] <sup>7</sup>

**(a) Islamic philosophers' use of reasoning about creation. [10]**

Mark according to the **AO1** – 10-mark levels of response marking grid for knowledge and understanding. Answers may include some of the following ideas, but all valid material must be credited.

- The creation of the world, explanation of it and making sense of the issues, was something which occupied philosophers and theologians. Islamic philosophers sought to prove using evidence and rational deduction that the world was created by a supreme being, God.
- They said that the Qur'an could be seen both in the book (Qur'an al-Tadwini) and through signs in the natural world (Qur'an al-Takwini). Indeed, the Qur'an itself called Muslims to observe the signs which God had sent, in many verses such as Qur'an 16.11: 'With it He produces for you corn, olives, date-palms, grapes and every kind of fruit: verily in this is a sign for those who give thought.'
- Ibn Sina argued that God must have existed before everything else to be the first cause of the universe, from which everything followed. As there was one cause, there was unity in the universe. Everything was dependent on this first cause, the 'necessary existent'. This cause continues to be the ultimate power behind everything which keeps on happening in the world, forever.
- Al-Biruni saw unity in the world around and felt a sense of freshness, which he interpreted as a sign of God's power.
- The newness meant the universe was created within time; time existed before the universe.
- Ibn Rushd read the Classical philosopher Aristotle and accepted his reasoning. He said that Aristotle had proved the universe was eternal, so scholars should accept this.
- Ibn Arabi said that the universe was a reflection of God's attributes, and God was eternal, so the universe was too, going through various phases of expansion and contraction.
- Ibn Khaldun described a gradual process of creation. He observed similarities between species and suggested that over time they adapted, rather like the theory of evolution.
- Other philosophers, such as the traditionalist scholar al-Ghazali got frustrated with the discussions of the philosophers. He argued that there was incoherence in their explanations.
- Furthermore, some warned that the philosophers were using rationalism and ignoring clearly revealed verses in the Qur'an, which ought to be taken as an authority in their own right, without the need for reasoning.
- The Qur'an 21.30 states: 'The heavens and the earth were joined together (as one Unit of Creation), before We clove them asunder? We made from water every living thing.' To many, this is similar to the 'Big Bang' modern scientific theory, and evidence without need of Islamic philosophers.

<sup>7</sup> May/June 2024

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This image shows a full page of a worksheet designed for handwriting practice. It consists of approximately 20 horizontal rows. Each row is defined by two parallel dashed lines, creating a series of uniform gaps where letters can be written. The lines are evenly spaced across the entire page, providing a guide for letter height and placement. There is no text or other markings on the page.

**(b) Links between reasoning about creation and Muslims' care for the environment. [15]**

Mark according to the AO2 – 15-mark levels of response marking grid for analysis and evaluation. Answers may refer to any religious theory or teaching. Students may propose, analyse and evaluate some of the following arguments. All relevant arguments must be credited.

- Islamic philosophers and theologians described God as the creator of the world; it followed that the world belongs to God and when dealing with the world, Muslims should therefore respect it and care for it because they are dealing with God's creation.
- Several verses of the Qur'an command Muslims to care for the environment. For example, Qur'an 2:30 states: 'Behold, thy Lord said to the angels: 'I will create a vice-regent on earth.'" Viceregent (khalifah) suggests humankind is caring for what God has created, an agent for God in the world, looking after it for him.
- It could be argued that it is in people's interest to care for their environment for selfish reasons: to improve their own neighbourhood and quality of life. But by reasoning about creation, Muslims see this as a duty to God rather than personal, and a duty on which they may be judged in the afterlife by the creator.
- The Qur'an mentions that God created in order to provide for humankind's every need, as a mercy, and that humans cannot make trees grow themselves without God's help.
- The Prophet (pbuh) linked tree planting to rewards: the person who plants a tree will have a tree planted for them in paradise. Following Muhammad (pbuh), Caliph Abu Bakr ordered Muslims to protect trees, even whilst in battle.
- Actions in this world were linked to rewards in the afterlife because of the role of the creator in providing the environment in this world which Muslims need to look after.
- It could be argued that creation and care for the environment should be seen as separate. The creator has a distinct role and God's role cannot be mixed with humans. Muslims cannot hope to do even the slightest tasks which only God has the power to.
- Muslims should also guard against the thinking that they might have the power to change the world that God has made, as this might lead to ideas that the world could be manipulated for the good of people over and above what God has ordained for them.
- Muslims might distinguish between environmental duty to God, which bring reward, and serving the environment, which might be seen as creating partners beside God (shirk) and be considered un-Islamic.
- Some might argue that God has made the world for humankind to rightfully exploit within due bounds; as long as Islamic law (shariah) is adhered to, caring for the environment should not be the first concern.

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(a) Explain how one significant work written by a Muslim that you have studied might be used to invite people to Islam. [10]

(b) 'It is more effective to use different sources for different people.' Discuss this statement with regards to ways in which Muslims might explain to others their main beliefs (da'wah) today. [15]

[Total: 25] <sup>8</sup>

(a) How one significant work written by a Muslim that you have studied might be used to invite people to Islam. [10]

Mark according to the AO1 – 10-mark levels of response marking grid for knowledge and understanding. Answers may include some of the following ideas, but all valid material must be credited.

- Inviting people to Islam (da'wah) might include explaining the main beliefs of Islam to them in a way they can understand and relate to.
- This includes explaining questions about the world around, making sense of signs in it and relating it to creation by the one, unseen God.

Candidates might choose any significant work they have studied. Those listed in the syllabus are:

- – Ibn Tufayl's work Hayy ibn Yaqzan
- – Al-Ghazali's Incoherence of the Philosophers
- – Ibn Khaldun's work on social science, The Muqaddimah
- – the mystical poetry of Rabi'a al-'Adawiyya
- – Al-Biruni's work on comparative religion, History of Religions
- – a published work chosen by the candidate
- Hayy Ibn Yaqzan seeks to explain the existence of God and creation through a philosophical tale. Boy Hayy is marooned alone on a desert island and grows up with a gazelle. He works out for himself that there must be a single creator behind the universe. This might help bring da'wah to someone looking for a philosophical approach.
- Al-Ghazali criticized Muslims who followed Greek philosophy, in The Incoherence of the Philosophers. He argues that the Qur'an should be taken as proof and Muslims should then find deeper meaning through prayer and spiritual practices, whereas philosophy can lead to confusion. This might help bring da'wah to someone looking for traditional routines of faith.
- Rabi'a's poetry might inspire someone looking for mysticism and inner meaning, as well as her example as a Muslim woman and humble ascetic, who had the strength and conviction to give up wealth and lead a life of humility and devotion to God in prayer, which is reflected through her poetry.
- Answers should link the details of whatever work they have chosen to how this can be used to inspire, persuade and convince someone about the merits of Islam.
- Credit personal examples of how candidates might have experienced da'wah and how they might have discussed a work they have studied with others and the reaction it brought.

<sup>8</sup> OCT/NOV 2024

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**(b) 'It is more effective to use different sources for different people.' Discuss this statement with regards to ways in which Muslims might explain to others their main beliefs (da'wah) today. [15]**

#### **AO2 – Analysis and evaluation**

Mark according to the AO2 – 15-mark levels of response marking grid for analysis and evaluation. Answers may refer to any Islamic religious theory or teaching. Candidates may propose, analyse and evaluate some of the following arguments. All relevant arguments must be credited.

#### **Definitions**

- This statement suggests that people might respond better if da'wah is tailored to them personally. For example, a person interested in mysticism might be better addressed with a book about Sufism, as compared to a person interested in discussion, who might be better given a book of philosophy.

#### **Agree**

- Muhammad (pbuh) sometimes preached words of warning, when he addressed the polytheists, and sometimes words of encouragement and exhortation, particularly to the new Muslims in Medina. This suggests that a degree of tailoring of the message is a part of the Sunnah.
- People live in different societies around the world today, have different life experiences and relate to literature in different ways.
- The existence of a wealth of different sources which may be used for da'wah might be seen as a sign that God has blessed Muslims with all this, and no type has been excluded by the Prophet (pbuh), so Muslims should use tailored sources for effectiveness.

#### **Disagree**

- God is One. Muslims therefore should be able to explain God in one way which might avoid confusion.
- The Qur'an itself is the one surviving holy book of Islam from which teachings are drawn, so it would make sense to use this as a single source. Using other sources might lead to theological disagreements.
- This suggests Islam can be individualistic. But in becoming Muslim, a person should engage with the community of Muslims (ummah). This might mean that using similar sources would be more effective at preparing people from different backgrounds for interaction in Muslim communities.

#### **Conclusions**

Evaluations should balance out the different factors discussed and come to an overall judgement about whether it is more effective to use different sources for different people.

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